

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

*Pleading for a complete return to Christianity
as it was in the beginning.*

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BAPTISM : IN THE EPISTLES OF PAUL

PAUL'S epistles are written to Christians — to those who had been baptised "into Jesus Christ". Yet Paul never treats baptism as something which has no longer any meaning, or as something which Christians can ignore in their "going on to perfection". Paul rather recalls to Christians the event of their baptism as an inspiration to continue faithful so that they may attain and realise their heavenly calling.

Romans 6 : 1-11

For this purpose he demonstrates what baptism into Christ has accomplished in the lives of Christians, and what it has made them. No finer passage on this subject can be referred to than what Paul writes to the Christians in Rome (Rom. 6:1-11). Very often, and rightly, we use verses 3 and 4 of this passage to show that baptism is *immersion*, — burial in water, and *emergence* — coming up out of water — rising again. But to read on to verse 11 we find it means far more than the outward act. In verses 1 and 2 Paul says, "What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who *died to sin* live any longer in it?" (Italics ours). That Paul's readers *died to sin* was shown by their baptism, as he goes on to say: "Do you not know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death?" (Baptism was our dying to sin). Our immersion was not a *mode of baptism* (there is no such thing) but a burial of one who is dead.(to sin). "We were buried, therefore with him by baptism *into death*, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (vs 3-4).

In verse 5 Paul sets out the glories of baptism: "For if in baptism we have been united with him *in a death like his*, we shall certainly be united with him *in a resurrection like his*." The uniting with Christ is *past*; it took place in our baptism — a specific event in time: "*we have been united*." The resurrection is future: "*We shall be ... in a resurrection like his*." Notice that "*like his*" — a resurrection like Christ's. Not only a spiritual resurrection "*to walk in newness of life*", but as real a resurrection as Christ's was — "*like his*". "Because I live" said Jesus to His apostles "*you shall live also*." Thus baptism is an assurance, a guarantee, that those who remain faithful to Christ Jesus shall share in His final victory and resurrection over sin, death, the grave and the devil.

Baptism and The Gospel

We have said "*to those who remain faithful*". Baptism is a death, burial and resurrection which begins the "*newness of life*". the sharing in fellowship with.

Christ's own death, burial and resurrection. These very things constitute the gospel: in 1 Cor. 15:1-4 Paul writes: "Now I remind you, brethren, in what terms I first preached the gospel..." Omitting verse 2 and going on to verse 3 Paul tells us what the gospel is: "the gospel... that Christ died for our sins... that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day..." Thus the gospel is the facts of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ — the very same things portrayed in baptism. These three great events are similarly proclaimed in the Lord's supper, the breaking of bread. Of both baptism and the breaking of bread Paul says "I received from the Lord what I delivered to you" (1 Cor. 15:3; 11:23).

Now back to Rom. 6. Verse 5 begins with the word "For" — a conjunction linking up with what Paul has already said in the previous four verses. If what Paul has written there is true, all that he goes on to say in verses 5 to 11 is equally true. We must not "continue in sin" because we have been baptised into Christ. As His death, burial and resurrection were events which make men and women "new creations in Christ Jesus", so in baptism *our* death to sin, burial of the body which is dead to sin, and re-rising of that old body as a "new man" are life-changing events in the Christian's history. Christ's death, burial and resurrection usher in the glories that are tasted in this life and are yet to be experienced. So the Christian's baptism is the entrance to his new life and the fulness, in time and eternity, of his salvation.

The mighty blessings that follow baptism are mentioned in verses 6 to 10: our old self was crucified, as Christ was, that we might be no longer enslaved to sin; we are freed from sin; if we have died with Christ we shall also live with him; as with Christ, so we shall never die again — death shall not have dominion over us any more than over Him; like Him, we (in baptism) have died once for all; as He, so we now live to God.

This is not wishful thinking, nor "pie in the sky by -and-by". It is not self-delusion nor an attempt to cheer us up when so much around us seems against us. It is not to assure us that all will come right in the end. It is plain solid fact. It is evident, seen and heard and handled, as John stresses in the 1st chapter of his 1st Epistle. It can be reckoned upon; it is a foundation to build upon; it can be taken as tested and proven. And that is exactly what Paul tells us to do in verse 11. There he states the practical outcome of his preceding teaching and premisses. In the King James version we are told, "Likewise *reckon* ye also yourselves to be dead indeed to sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." In the RSV we have, "So you also must *consider* yourselves dead indeed to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." This is, in my view, one of the passages of scripture which the KJV renders better than other translations. "Reckon" is much stronger, more definite than "consider". It means that we are not simply to *contemplate*, to *think upon* the truths Paul has set out concerning baptism and what follows; but to make those truths the groundwork of our lives, to *act* upon them. We are not to *hope* that these things are so, but to *know* that they are, by the word, the authority of God Himself. These things *are* so, and Paul is saying to Christians, in effect, "BE WHAT YOU ARE".

The authority for baptism

We see, then, that baptism, far from being unnecessary or a matter of indifference or of one's personal choice, is in the New Testament vitally connected with some of the most glorious truths and mighty events in the Bible. One final event will drive home this lesson.

In one of the appearances that Jesus made to His apostles after His resurrection He gave them what we term the "Great Commission" — "Go... make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20). There is the authority to preach the gospel and to baptise, the authority of Christ Himself. But by omitting verse 18 preceding, we overlook much of this authority.

There Jesus says, "*All authority* in heaven and on earth *has been* given to me,; Go *therefore...*" (*Italics mine*). There Christ, who has all authority, tells His followers that, *therefore* (because He has all authority) they are to preach and baptise and teach. In other words, Christ is making the most stupendous claim ever uttered by man; yet in the same breath, so to speak, He commands His messengers to preach, baptise and teach. Dare anyone else have placed baptism in such a setting? If so, he would be guilty of utter blasphemy. Christ Himself placed baptism there. How then can too prominent and important a place be given to this sublime doctrine?

In this short series of articles on Baptism we have tried to put out of mind our own views and opinions on the subject, and to present what we believe is the clear teaching of scripture. We are aware of the possibility of this or any other subject's becoming an obsession and given a position out of all proportion to its importance. Rather than our over-stressing baptism in its many facets we believe that we have not yet brought out its full meaning and implications as set out in the New Testament. We have striven not to present "Church of Christ doctrine" but simply the teaching of the word of God.

Indeed, the writings of many great Bible scholars and expositors who do not practise immersion can be quoted as being quite as strong and firm as what we have written. David King wrote a booklet — *Baptism, Pouring, Sprinkling — the Question Settled* — in which he quoted numerous non-immersionist Bible scholars to prove what baptism is and what takes place in baptism.

But we must content ourselves with a quotation which we have twice previously published in the *Scripture Standard*. (August and December 1959):

There is the witness, too, of some of the finest Bible scholars who do not themselves practise immersion. Such men have written about baptism, what it is and what it does, in words as firm and strong as any we use. Hear this, for example, from Bishop Anders Nygren of the Lutheran Church, in his *Commentary on Romans*:

"It is immediately evident that in these words (Rom. 6:3-4) Paul makes reference to the external form of the rite of baptism. When he who is baptised is immersed in the water, the act signifies burial 'with Christ'; and when he again comes up out of the water, that signifies resurrection 'with Christ'. But it would be an utter misinterpretation if, for that reason, one were to characterise Paul's view of baptism as 'symbolical', in the sense in which that word is generally used. For, according to Paul, in baptism we have to do with realities, not merely with symbolical representations. That which baptism symbolises also actually happens, and precisely through baptism."

EDITOR

PILTDOWN

EDITOR'S NOTE : In order to appreciate the following article it will be helpful to have some understanding of what was the Piltdown Find and who was the Piltdown Man. To give this background we reprint part of the article on "Piltdown Man or Eoanthropos Dawsoni in *Everyman's Encyclopaedia*, rev^d edn. 1967, vol. 11, p. 2 :

"Named from its discoverer [a man named Dawson] who, in 1912, found traces of a primitive skull at Piltdown, Sussex... Animal bones, rough flint tools and a pointed tool of bone were also found. It was long thought that the remains represented one type of man alive at the beginning of Pleistocene (very ancient) times. Detailed technical examination in 1953-4 showed that the so-called human jaw is almost certainly that of a young orang-outang [a manlike ape] ; that the cranium... had been artificially stained to match the gravel from

which it was recovered. The animal remains and the flint tools had been similarly treated and the bone tool had been cut with a modern steel knife. The whole of the material must be regarded as fraudulent..."

One is impressed, on looking up information in scientific books and other publications accepting and propagating the theory of evolution, to find how little is said about this Piltdown fraud, and what few details are given. Little wonder, for the enthusiastic reception of the find of the "Piltdown Man" was due to its being hailed by some famous scientists and biologists of that time as marking another absolute proof of the antiquity of man being scores of thousands of years farther back than previous finds had "proved". Even experts can be so carried away with their "assured facts" that a skilful deception can be hailed as authentic. The trouble is that this theory of evolution is treated as fact, although it has changed its "facts" many times since Darwin published his *Origin of Species* in 1859.

(End of Editor's note)

THE PARADOX OF PILTDOWN

MY good friend and Christian Brother, Derek Daniell, was waiting. We had finally coincided our schedules to make the trip to Piltdown, It was there we hoped to secure the old abandoned Piltdown meeting-house, to hold a series of lessons in an effort to revive interest in the truth of the gospel of our Lord. The Piltdown church had been a fine church in the old days. It was 150 strong when the great evangelist, David King, had converted the whole church from Adventism to a group "patterned after the New Testament order". That was back in 1846 and it made Piltdown a direct descendant of the Restoration Movement in Great Britain. The road through the Ashdown Forest was like a newly unravelled ribbon winding, weaving, over the Ashdown plateau; then dropping through a massive outcropping of rock, we came into a rolling botton called the "Piltdown Ouse" I told Derek I wanted to see the spot where the infamous "Piltdown articles" had been found. He was certain that Mrs. Sargent, who took care of the building, would know something of it and we could go by if it wasn't too late.

I'm not sure what I expected Piltdown to be like. I suppose just like any other picturesque little village—a High Street, shops, a few well kept cottages and perhaps even a Tudor house or two. It was, rather, the old meeting-house right smack in the middle of "Piltdown Common" that had been the life and focal point for the whole area. But where were all the people now? For a community that had enjoyed such fame and fortune in days gone by, this was a sad commentary. But, as I was soon to learn, this was the "paradox of Piltdown," a village of broken dreams.

Piltdown and David King

We entered the churchyard between two of the largest and most wonderfully wrought yew trees I had ever seen. Derek and I proceeded down a tidy path to a little cottage adjacent to the rear of the building. Mrs. Sargent appeared at the door and invited us in. Easing through the doorway, we followed her into a small stone kitchen, where a tea kettle was already on the fire. "I imagine you want to see inside the building," she said at length. "Yes," replied Derek, and then explained our purpose for coming. From the kitchen, we stepped into a hall, then slipping through a windowlike opening, found ourselves standing near a dusty podium. I gazed around the old auditorium in wonder. Water stains streaked the walls in several places where slates were missing on the roof. Ancient pews were stacked along one wall. There was a large "springfed" baptistry in the floor but I calculated it would require a sturdy soul to descend into it. Forty or fifty apples lay drying on the floor, their fragrant scent permeating the air. Four hymn numbers were still encased in the rack to the right of the speaker's stand. This was one of David King's greatest works, I thought. It was just one year before Alexander Campbell presided over the annual conference of British churches at Chester in the year 1847 that King had so forcefully persuaded the Piltdown church to renounce its former error with two well directed questions... "whether the teachings they had listened to were in harmony with the

New Testament? This was affirmed by all the members, except two, standing up. Again, whether, that being so, they were willing and prepared to adopt New Testament order and teaching? This was also affirmed with the same unanimity. Thus a church of over 150 members came over to Primitive Faith and Practice, with one consent," King, of course, was to go on in later years to distinguish himself as a speaker, editor and debater. Though he began preaching and establishing churches in the London area, most of his work was done in the Midlands around Birmingham and Manchester. Indeed, so esteemed was he in his day that at his death on 26 June, 1894, a huge monument was erected at his grave by "Disciples of Christ who revere his memory." Among the inscriptions on the monument, there appears the simple tribute "He was a good man", "Mighty in the Scriptures." However, in recent years ill winds have befallen the earthly works and dreams of David King. Since his passing, many of the "Restoration churches" have drifted steadily toward liberalism and have thus "lost their purpose for existence." This historical tragedy is seen as follows : At the first recorded conference of "British Churches of Christ" in 1842, the number of churches in Britain stood at 50 churches with a reported membership of 1,300. Five years later, there were 80 churches with a total membership of 2,300. That number steadily increased through the years until in 1920 there was a total of 196 churches reporting a membership of 16,011. In 1930, there were 174 churches with 16,596 members. From that date, there has been a general decline until in 1967 there were 102 churches reporting a total membership of 6,091. The Piltdown church was among the fallen. It simply no longer exists. "The old folks have died and the young ones have gone away." Other "restoration" churches have remained very conservative through the years.

The Piltdown Hoax

Back in the cottage kitchen, we were joined by Mrs. Sargent's husband. As we settled around a colourful tea-cosy and a pile of shortbread, I asked Mrs. Sargent if she knew where the Piltdown skull had been found. "I certainly do," broke in her husband, "I'm the one who dug up the tooth." My mouth must have dropped open a hand's span as I turned to catch a glimpse of Derek. I searched the couple's face for a twinkle or the crack of a smile -- it was no joke. "You what?" I exclaimed. He repeated it, "I'm the one who dug up the Piltdown tooth," He thoughtfully beheld his wife for a moment, "I believe it was just after I came back from Turkey - yes, it was in 1924. This chap, Woodward, came to me and asked if I wanted to do a bit of digging." He then told of digging a hole about waist deep in the area where Mrs. Sargent's uncle, Tom Paige, had found part of a skull in 1910. He said Woodward was sifting the dirt, when he (Woodward) suddenly stooped down and picked up what Sargent thought to be a tooth. "This is what I've been looking for," said Woodward. He then gave Sargent "ten bob" told him to cover up the hole and not to tell anyone. All this time my mind was racing back over the sketches of history I could recall about that great fraud. But, of one thing I am quite certain -- the narrative they were relating to us was no fraud to them. I was later to learn that every single piece of the "Piltdown articles" was a fraud. With the possible exception of the original piece of "cranium" found by Mrs. Sargent's uncle, all were in fact "salted" in the area by some "unknown culprit". Even the original piece, from unknown origin, and reputed to be "very old" is highly suspect by many authorities. As the story goes, Tom Paige, a local workman, was digging gravel from a small pit on Barkham Manor to repair the road when he uncovered a "piece of skull". He kicked it aside, not knowing what it was. Somehow, Charles Dawson, a local solicitor and amateur geologist, anthropologist, historian, etc. learned of "the find" He poked around the area for some two or three years, supposedly uncovering a lower jawbone with some teeth missing, as well as some artifacts. Finally, in 1912, he triumphantly announced he had found a "missing link" a race of prehistoric man to be known variously as "the Dawn man" "Dawsoni" and more commonly "the Piltdown man". Dawson presented his "finds"

to his good friend, the eminent paleontologist, Dr. Arthur Smith Woodward of the British Museum. Woodward was evidently completely taken by the articles. Being already obeisant to the evolutionary hypothesis, he saw in this development a fulfilment of all his expectations. He was fond of talking of their very own discoveries, right here in England. Dawson, Woodward, Sir Arthur Keith and their colleagues were instantly catapulted to fame. Casts of the Piltdown articles were worked into the evolutionary lineage flooding the walls of the huge South Kensington Museum in London. From the year 1912 through 1915, Dawson, Woodward and others continued to dig through the silt of Piltdown. Suddenly, "out of the blue" as Woodward himself described it, Dawson announced another spectacular find at Sheffield Park about two miles away. Unfortunately, Dawson fell ill and died the following year before he was able to identify the spot. Woodward, obviously puzzled by the mystery of this new find was, nevertheless, unshaken in his belief concerning the authenticity of the Piltdown man. So devoted was Woodward to his dream that upon his retirement from the British Museum, he moved to nearby Haywards Heath and continued to search faithfully for the lost site until as late as 1931. Of course, he found nothing for in fact there was nothing there to begin with. Ernest Sargent had been relating one of those occasions when Woodward had "used local labourers" to continue his investigations. Then in 1953, long after the death of both Dawson and Woodward, it was discovered by the use of advanced methods of investigation that every article was fraudulent. The all important jawbone was that of a chimpanzee, the teeth having been deliberately filed. Most items had been dyed with a common stain known as "Vandyke Brown".

I had completely forgotten the time until Ernest Sargent picked up a straw, ignited the end from the coals of the fireplace and leaning over, touched it to a gas lamp extending from the wall. The lamp flamed to life. Derek reminded me that if I wanted to see the marker at the Piltdown site, we had better get on while we could still see. After thanking the Sargents for their hospitality, we drove over to Barkham Manor. Parking the car at the gate, we walked up a private drive bordered by hedges on each side. Two hundred yards or so up the road under a hedgerow appeared a stone somewhat like that found on graves. I strained to see the inscription through the encroaching darkness. It read:

"HERE

In the old river gravel
Mr. Charles Dawson F.S.A.
found the fossil skull of
Piltdown man 1912-1913

The discovery was described
by Mr. Dawson and Sir Arthur
Smith Woodward in the Quarterly
Journal of the Geological
Society 1913-1915"

The monument had been erected at Woodward's own expense, thus somewhat pathetically attaching his own name and integrity to the shameful foolishness now known as the "Piltdown Fantasy".

The Truth and a Lie

I suddenly felt very lonely in this place. Piltown had successfully exalted and then consecutively crushed the earthly dreams of two great men, David King and Arthur Smith Woodward. Yet, there was an infinite separation between these two giants. King's work was a church - the souls of men and women. They shall complement his eternal abode in Heaven. David King had built his house upon a rock. On the other hand, Arthur Smith Woodward gave his life in the service of a colossal lie. Reputedly duped at the hand of his friend, Dawson, he built his house upon the sand. As Derek and I made our way back to the car, a thin coat of fog had groped its way along the low field and was spilling out into the road. I thought - may God have mercy upon the foolish hearts of men.

FRED MELTON

IS BAPTISM NECESSARY FOR SALVATION?

A correspondence in a New Zealand newspaper between a Preacher of "THE BRETHREN" and BRO. SAM WILSON, formerly of Dennyloanhead, Scotland.

"THE BRETHREN" SAY

Baptism, Special Note.

I had no intention of writing on "Baptism" until the recent appearance of articles under the heading "Truth for the Present Time". These necessitate a review of the teaching of the Word of God on this important subject.

Salvation and Baptism

The teaching of the Bible clearly sets forth the following facts:

1 Salvation is based on the sacrificial atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ, AND ON THAT ALONE (see 1 Peter 1: 18-21; 1 John 1:7; Heb. 9:22).

2 The sinner is justified by a personal trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as his sin bearer and Saviour, AND BY NOTHING ELSE (see Acts 13:38,39; John 3:16,36; Acts 16:31).

3 Man's WORKS have no part whatever in his salvation (see Ephesians 2:8,9; Romans 4:1-5).

4 Neither BAPTISM nor any other "sacrament" has anything whatever to do with the obtaining of salvation (see Acts 4:12; Titus 3:5).

(There follows a statement asserting that baptism is immersion, not sprinkling *Baptismos* and *baptisma* mean nothing else in the Greek of the New Testament.

THE SCRIPTURES SAY

Good Advice

IN John's Gospel, chap. 2, the story is told of Jesus being present at a wedding in Cana. The mother of Jesus was also present, and believing in His power she told Jesus, "They have no wine." His mother gave the servants good advice: "WHATSOEVER HE SAITH UNTO YOU, DO IT."

It is not enough to believe ABOUT Jesus. We must believe HIM. That is, DO WHAT HE SAYS. His Gospel is preached for the OBEDIENCE OF FAITH (Rom.16:26). Sinners must repent and confess Jesus Christ before men, and be baptised into Him (Acts 8:26-40).

Be advised by the mother of Jesus: "WHATSOEVER HE SAITH UNTO YOU DO IT." The result will be still more astonishing than that at the wedding in Cana.

You shall be forgiven all your sins. You shall receive the Holy Spirit, enabling you to live holily, justly and unblameably, filled with joy in hope of eternal life.

We notice that the writer for "Truth for the Times" says: "Surely no man who realises something of the infinite value of the precious blood of Christ fetter!"

"THE BRETHREN" SAY

He ends by saying that "The Greek Orthodox Church immerses.

THE GREEKS OUGHT TO KNOW THE MEANING OF THEIR OWN LANGUAGE")

Baptism and the Cross of Christ

The Cross of Christ is the focal point of the divine plan of the ages, revealed in the sacred Scriptures.

When our first parents sinned, God clothed them with coats of skin. The animals slain to provide their covering was the first foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Redemption was wrought for us by the awful conflict of the three hours of darkness when Jehovah laid our sins upon the sinless soul of His Beloved Son.

"Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood,
Sealed my pardon with His blood.
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!"

In the agony of the Garden of Gethsemane our Lord Jesus prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me."

In the hours of darkness and dereliction He cried, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

Surely no man who realises something of the infinite value of the precious blood of Christ could imagine that his salvation needed baptism or anything else in addition to the finished work of the Cross.

The unique glory of the Cross is the foundation of all the central purposes of God.

Perish the thought that the agony of the Lord of Glory was insufficient! Perish the thought that anything man can do could add to its effectiveness!

"The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7).

Perish the thought that His mighty sacrifice cleanses me from part only of my sin, and man's works and sacraments cleanse me from the rest!

THE SCRIPTURES SAY

Surely the Apostle Paul had an appreciation of the infinite value of the precious blood of Christ, and he says in 1 Cor. 15:17, "if Christ is not raised, YOUR FAITH IS VAIN; ye are yet in your sins."

This scripture does not detract from the effectiveness of the death of Jesus on the Cross. But it shows that something more is required as complementary to the Cross for our salvation. The death of Jesus Christ, and His resurrection, prove that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. But all men do not become reconciled to God.

The Apostle Peter, speaking by the Holy Spirit, testified and exhorted, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40).

These conditions are not men's thoughts or works. Men could neither imagine nor devise anything pleasing to God.

Surely Jesus Christ had a full realisation of what it cost His Father and Himself to suffer the horrors of Gethsemane, also the agony and shame of the Cross; yet we find that after His resurrection He has added something for MAN TO DO in order to be saved.

He says that we have not only to believe, but to repent and confess Him and to be baptised in His name.

May we humbly ask: can a man be saved without repenting and without confessing Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour? By the same rule of faith a man must be baptised for salvation. Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). To try and discount the Lord's command concerning repentance, confession and baptism does not add anything to the glory of the Lord, but rather detracts from His glory.

"Not what these hands have done
 Could save my guilty soul;
 Not what this toiling flesh has borne
 Could make my spirit whole.
 Thy work alone, O Christ,
 Removes my load of sin;
 Thy blood alone, O Lamb of God,
 Doth give me peace within.
 No other work, save Thine,
 No meaner blood will do;
 No strength save that which is divine
 Can bear me safely through."

"Though He were a Son yet learned
 He obedience by the things which He
 suffered. And being made perfect HE
 BECAME THE AUTHOR OF ETERNAL
 SALVATION UNTO ALL THEM THAT
 OBEY HIM" (Heb. 5:8,9). By obedience
 to the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ,
 the power of the Cross becomes effective.
 But to them who know not God and that
 OBEY NOT the gospel of our Lord Jesus
 Christ (2nd Thessalonians 1:8) their lot
 is with the fearful and unbelieving in the
 lake of fire (Revelation 21:8).

S. WILSON

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JULY 1971

4-1 Samuel 1	2 Timothy 1
11-1 Samuel 8	Galatians 4:1-26
18-1 Samuel 28:3-19	Acts 16:16-40
25-Psalm 1	Philippians 4

SIDELIGHTS ON ACTS

WE have thought it well to turn aside from our readings in Acts to related passages in the letters of Paul. Luke wrote a remarkable and very accurate history, but a very incomplete one so far as details and dates are concerned. This has made it much more interesting an exercise to fill in these details from the letters.

Timothy

By reading the first chapter of Paul's second letter — and incidentally the last letter of his we have — we get a special insight into this young Christian's life. It must have been the first visit to Derbe and Lystra which brought the Saviour into Timothy's life (Acts 14:6-23). He became active in the work of the churches in the district, so that on his second visit Paul was attracted to him as a suitable person to teach and train in the missionary activities in which his heart rejoiced and his powers were exercised. As so often happens the Lord needed someone with a background of religious life. It seems strange that Timothy's mother and grandmother were first brought to know Christ but his mother had married a gentile, something so normally abhorrent to a good Jewess. It might be interesting to know

the romance of love behind this behaviour but the Holy Spirit has chosen to conceal this while revealing the mother's (and grandmother's) attitude to the Scriptures so fully (2 Tim. 3:15). We are not even told whether the father became a Christian also. Obviously the father could not have objected to the training of his son in the Jewish way, and evidently the grandmother was not an unwelcome mother-in-law! So the two women were given grace to influence Timothy effectively for his eternal good. The Holy Spirit Himself communicated the choice also (1 Tim. 1:18). All things worked together.

The appointment of bishops in the churches (Acts 14:23) with prayer and fasting played a part in the appointment of Timothy for his special work. They co-operated with the apostles, and it is in keeping with Paul's attitude that his hands and theirs were involved (1 Tim. 4:14 also). Timothy would be missed in the churches around Iconium and Lystra, but there was no thought of standing in his way for the greater work. And what a responsible and exacting work this was! The mutual love and esteem of these two soldiers of the cross are an example and inspiration for all Christians. We read into the story a rather reticent character in Timothy, and a very affectionate and even sentimental one. His tears indicated both love and fear, and stimulated the sympathy and protective instincts of his spiritual father.

The Galatians

By reading this passage in Paul's letter we learn about Paul's first contact with these people. It appears that when he "came into the regions of Phrygia

and Galatia he was suffering from his "thorn in the flesh" (Acts 16:6). We can only speculate here that the trouble was to do with his eyes. Why should otherwise the Galatians feel so sympathetic that they would "gladly have plucked out their eyes and given them to me". Something about his appearance was objectionable. It could well have been to do with his eyes. Facial disfigurement makes us ashamed of our appearance, and people turn away. However he so preached and lived that they loved him and longed to help him. His detractors at another place regarded his "bodily presence weak" (2 Cor. 10:10). Some of the persecutions he endured may already have made their mark (2 Cor. 11: 23-27; Gal. 6:17).

Have we also the explanation of God's dealing with the preachers in "forbidding" to work either in Asia or Bithynia? Was the sickness of body the means of preventing this, and his being led to Troas—did Paul have recourse to the physician at Troas? That is where Luke enters the Acts story.

The Philippians

What a lovely story of changed lives is told here! The sequel is even better, for the love of the converts at Philippi continued to bear fruit many years after as well as immediately, even at Thessalonica (Acts 17). Writing elsewhere Paul expresses appreciation of their generous hearts in relation to the collection being made among the gentile churches for the poor saints in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:1 & 2 - Philippi is in Macedonia). There was indeed practical evidence of their Christian love. We think carefully of the members of that church who included the probably well-to-do "seller of purple" and the "hardened" Roman jailor. The influence of the gospel needs no explanation so far as the prayer meeting at the riverside is concerned, but what a change for the family of the jailor. They were doubtless gentiles of a deep dye with no experience of even racial love, or of worship of the true God.

Our appreciation of the work of Paul and the life-changing power of the gospel grows as we consider the story of its spread in the darkness of that heathen

world. We wonder whether in the sight of God there is not a still darker picture in these days when in spite of all the enlightenment of a form of civilisation based in some degree upon the gospel, God is being rejected openly by a big proportion of the people. There must be the same power in the gospel which Paul and Timothy preached. We need to keep close to that, to see it at work first in ourselves, and then in others.

R.B. SCOTT

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Wigan, Scholes: The church has been blessed during special meetings held from Saturday, May 22nd to Monday 31st, conducted by Bro. Paul Jones, evangelist in the Slamannan District churches in Scotland. We regret that the chief purpose of the meetings—the salvation of men and women—was not achieved, although several friends from religious denominations and those having no such religious affiliations were present at the meetings.

Bro. Jones preached a series of gospel messages under the general title "He preached unto him JESUS". Christ was proclaimed as Lamb of God, Son of God, Son of man, Saviour of men and as The Only Name. Simply and clearly Christ was "lifted up" as central to all God's dealings with men, and, even if visitors were present for only one meeting, they were plainly shown the way of salvation.

Two notable features of the mission were a Questions Answered session and a forum on Baptism. In the former four young brethren—J. Layland, G. Melling and D. Melling (all from the Scholes assembly), and J. Morgan from Hindley—dealt with important questions asked concerning the Bible, the gospel, the church and the life of the Christian; Bro. Jack Parker acted as question-master. The forum on Baptism, with Bro. Jones as chairman, dealt with the subject under three heads: Baptism: what it is (Alfred Marsden, Albert St., Wigan); Baptism: whom it is for (C. Melling, Wigan Scholes) and Baptism: what it is for (L. Morgan, Hindley). These introductions were fol-

lowed by lively and interesting questions from both Christians and visiting friends. The forum was to try to meet those not members of the church at the point where they are, and to point out the way to become Christians, to be added to Christ's body, the church and to continue steadfastly.

In the mission an attempt was made to reach various groups and ages and states of mind. Hence children also were included, and two special meetings for them were arranged. The first of these was well attended, but the second coincided with the Spring Bank Holiday, with the result that attendance was lower.

We deeply appreciate the presence and prayers of those who so wholeheartedly supported the meetings: some attended every night. We especially thank the congregation at Hindley for what can only be termed their magnificent support, an average of 20 being at each meeting. Attendances generally were very good.

The church in Scholes has been encouraged by these blessings from the Lord and by the fellowship enjoyed "with those of like precious faith".

OBITUARY

Ince-in-Makerfield : The church has suffered loss and been depleted by the death of two loyal and faithful brothers, John Unsworth and Henry Blakeley. The passing of both was characterised by remarkable composure resulting from the full assurance of faith, giving a certain hope of resurrection to eternal life.

Brother John Unsworth, who was in his eighty-ninth year, had been a disciple of the Lord for well over seventy years, during which time he had been an active member of the congregations at Platt Bridge, Albert Street (Wigan) and the last few years Ince-in-Makerfield. Our brother had a quiet and unassuming disposition and a faith which resulted in loyal, devoted and dependable service to the Lord and His work.

He was a symbol of happier days in the churches and had chronicled many events which he recalled with pleasure.

He deplored the harmful divisions and unloving attitudes amongst brethren: he longed for the restoration of those times of refreshing which characterised the former happier years. Perhaps it was during the years when brethren found pleasure in each others' company that he developed his love for singing. He possessed a considerable vocabulary of tunes some of which are in danger of becoming extinct. Even to the last, despite his age, his presence in a meeting could be detected by the sweetness of his tenor voice.

Although his long life was punctuated by considerable adversity, he never allowed this to shake his faith in God. For many years he lived with his widowed daughter Eunice and her two children. He lived his last years in the home of Arthur and Eunice (Hood), for whose loving care and devotion we give thanks to the Lord.

His preparedness for death and contentment has left us with an inspiring example.

Brother Henry Blakeley became a Christian a few years ago as a result of the efforts of earlier brethren at Ince. He lived in the vicinity of the chapel and displayed a loyalty which despite physical disability was never stifled except by confining sickness. Although limited by a heart condition he laboured and quietly witnessed amongst his friends and neighbours. Impressed by the good news, he expected others to appreciate its clarity. He found a great joy in fellowship and recounted with pleasure treasured memories of visits to other congregations and the simple events of those days which had filled him with satisfaction and gratitude.

Although having worsened over a period of a few months, his passing at the age of 62 was a shock. Nevertheless he had no fear in death; rather did he look forward to the realisation of a cherished hope. He had laboured to bring his wife to Jesus and such has been his influence and example that since his death, she has met with us in morning and evening meetings. Remember her and us in your prayers as we strive to bring many to the Lord.

Motherwell : The church rejoices that Margery Purcell, wife of Bro. John Purcell put on her Lord in baptism on Sunday morning June 6th. We trust and pray that our Sister may grow in the love of her Saviour.

L. PURCELL

THE GLORY OF GOD

THE poet William Blake when a friend asked "When the sun rises, do you not see a round disc like a guinea?" replied "Oh, no no! I see an innumerable company of the heavenly host, crying 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.'"

DEPENDENCE upon the Holy Spirit is a genuine mark of any experience called Christian. Without it Christian experience would lack that warmth of contact which turns belief into faith, morality into religion, ceremony into service. (Hazeltine: *The God we Worship*)

IT is very easy to find formal and superficial links between the Old Testament and the New, and to present the matter as if the biblical revelation were a gigantic crossword puzzle with the clues in the O.T. and the solutions in the New.

We regret absence of "Question Box" this month. Bro. Gardiner's contribution has gone astray in the post.

Ince-in-Makerfield : The community has been encouraged in recent months by the obedience to the faith of Timothy John Partington and David Gorton. Both Timothy and David, whose immersions took place early in 1970, are now playing their full part in the activities. Both young brethren have great potential to offer to the congregation, being young in years and in the position of having had a thorough grounding in "those things believed amongst us." We look forward to their taking full advantage of their academic opportunities and maturing in faith and leading lives which will influence other lives for good.

Golden Wedding

At Lochside Chapel, Tranent, on 1st July 1921 by Bro. James Hoggan, evangelist: Thomas Nisbet to Annie B. Guiney. Present address : 8, Haldane Avenue, Haddington, East Lothian.

[Our warmest congratulations to Bro. and Sis. Nisbet. Both have before and through their married lives been faithful servants of God and His church, and devoted friends and supporters of the S.S. Their children follow in their steps]

EDITOR

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